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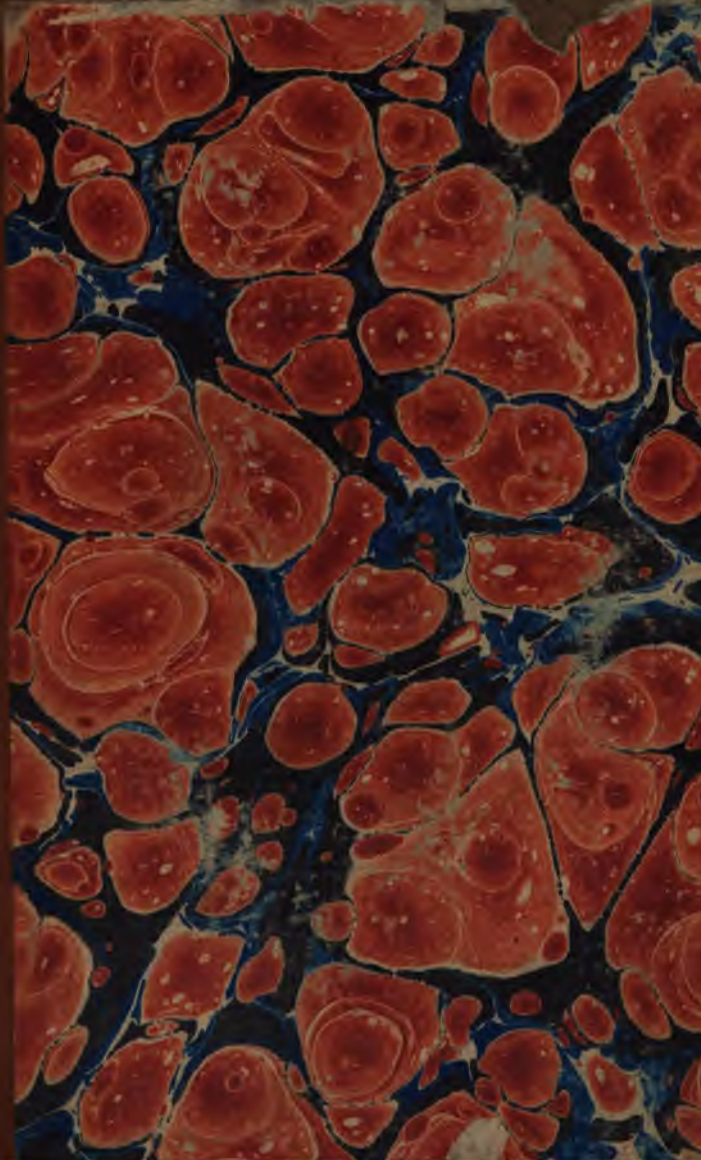

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VOICES FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

VOICES

FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

BY

CHARLES MACKAY,

LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF "VOICES FROM THE CROWD," "THE SALAMANDRINE," "LEGENDS OF THE ISLES," &c. &c.

BODLEIANA BIBLIOTHECA

"Che fai alma? che pensi?"

PETRARCH.

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TO

MRS. MATHESON,

OF

ACHANY AND THE LEWIS, &c.

WHOSE LOVE OF LITERATURE, ELEGANCE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT,
AND PRACTICE OF ALL THE VIRTUES THAT ADORN HER STATION,
ARE WELL KNOWN AND APPRECIATED
BY THOSE WHO HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF HER ACQUAINTANCE,

THE FOLLOWING VERSES

ARE VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE favour with which his last "Voices" were received has led to the title and to the publication of the present. With favour, or without it, any Author who is in love with his task will write; but without favour, in this day of superabundance of books, he will do wrong to publish. The Author of the following, while he has no thanks to give to his readers for any inducements to write, has many to give them for the inducements to publish which their good opinion has afforded. That good opinion has been doubly pleasant to him: pleasant as an encouragement, and pleasant for adding strength to a long-cherished conviction that, practical as the age may be, it is not too practical to refuse to listen to the voice of song, when he who sings is in earnest.

PREFACE.

Mr. Emerson, in one of his thoughtful Essays, speaks of "*new voices*, reviving a hope that the thoughts of the mind may yet, in some distant age—in some happy hour—be executed by the hands." The Author hopes that these "New Voices" of his may reach beyond the wilderness to the "Crowd" that listened to him before, and that they may not altogether fail in exciting others to indulge in the same aspirations for the good of humanity in which he indulges himself.

April 25*th*, 1847.

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VOICES FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

THE PROLOGUE.

"We three are young; we have a month to spare:
Money enough; and, whistling off our care,
We can forsake the turmoil of the town,
And tread the wilds—making our faces brown
With sunshine, on the peaks of some high Ben.
Let us away—three glad, unburden'd men—
And trace some mountain-torrent to its source,
Mid fern, and heather, juniper, and gorse,
Braving all weathers. I, with gun, one day
Will cater for you, and go forth to slay
The grouse in corries, where it loves to dwell;
Or sit with you, upon some granite-fell,
And talk for hours of high philosophy,
Or sun ourselves in warmth of poesy:

And should these tire, with rod in hand, we'll go
To streams that leap—too frolicsome to flow—
Angling for trout, and catch them by themselves,
In fancied citadel, beneath the shelves
Of slippery stone, o'er which the waters rush.
Let us away. My cheeks and forehead flush
At the mere thought; so glad would be my soul
To be alone with Nature for one whole
Untrammell'd month—having no thought of dross,
Or dull entanglements of gain and loss;
Of Blackstone drear, or Barnewell's Reports,
Or aught that smells of lawyers and the courts.
Let us away, this pleasant summer time,
Thou, Karl, canst muse, and shape the tuneful rhyme
Amidst thy well-beloved hills and straths:
Thou, Patrick, canst ascend the mountain-paths,
Thy well-filled flask in pocket, and rehearse
Plain prose with me, as genial as his verse;
And wet or whet each argumental flaw
With running waters, dashed with usquebaugh."
Thus Alistor, a Templar keen and young,
Of a clear head, and of a fluent tongue;—
Subtle logician, but with earnest mind,
And heart brimful of hope for human kind,

Spake to his friends; and him, with voice of cheer,
Answer'd the rhymer: "Half one toilsome year
I've moiled in cities, and, like thee, I long
To see the placid lochs, the torrents strong,
The purple moors, the white rocks, crimson-crowned,
And amber waters, in their depths embrowned.
One month of freedom, from the drowsy thrall
Of custom, would be health, joy, wisdom, all,
To us who know each other, and delight
To be let loose into the infinite
Of our own fancies—free from task and rule,
And all the stiff conventions of the school
Of the great world. Our tyrant, lean-faced care,
Shall not pursue us to the mountain air,
If we play truant. Let us hence away,
And have one month of pleasure while we may."
Patrick, the rough in speech, the true in heart,
A sculptor, born to elevate his art,
And loving it with fervour, such as burned
In old Pygmalion's spirit, when he yearned
For the sweet image that his hands had made,
Shouted consent. "But whither bound?" he said,
"What far off mountain-summit shall we scale?
What salt-sea loch, winding through many a vale,

Shall we explore? Or shall we rather glide
Through lakes inland, unruffled by a tide?—
Not that it matters. Thou, friend poet, know'st
Better than we all grandeurs of the coast:
The lochs, the straths, the hoary-headed Bens,
The windy corries, and the wild, green glens,
And all the thunderous waterfalls that leap
Betwixt the Atlantic and the German deep;
And we will follow, if our guide thou'lt be,
By Lomond, Linnhe, Lochy, or Maree;
Through Rosshire moors, to Hebridean isle,
Or mid the lordly mountains of Argyll,
Where'er thou wilt." The poet made reply,
With a keen pleasure sparkling in his eye:
"There is a valley, beautifully lone,
Rude of access, to few but hunters known:
A glen so full of grey magnificence,
Of rock and mountain, that with love intense,
Salvator's self, if thither he had strayed,
Might, rapture-struck, a dwelling-place have made
Of some wild nook. There, filled with ecstasies,
He might have sat, his spirit in his eyes,
And all his mind impregnate, till he wrought
On the dumb canvas an immortal thought.

But not all rude and gloomy is the vale:
Ye wild thyme odours, floating on the gale;
Ye tufts of heather, blooming on the slopes;
Ye birch-trees, waving from the rocky copes
Of many a hill, your boughs festooned in braids,
Or drooping, like the locks of love-lorn maids;
Ye dark green pines; ye larches, fan-like, spread;
And ye, witch-scaring rowans, gleaming red;
Ye flowers innumerous, earth-jewels fair,
That lift your eyelids to the morning air;
And all ye torrents, that with eloquent voice,
Call on the mountain-echoes to rejoice
And sing, amid the wilderness, a song
Of jubilant gladness, when your floods are strong;—
Attest the wild luxuriance of the scene
That lengthening spreads (with many a strath between,
And purple moorland, haunt of birds and bees)
Around the fern-clad feet and shaggy knees
Of mighty Nevis, monarch of the hills,
The paramount of mountains, gemmed with rills,
Scantily robed; his Titan-shoulders nude,
Lifting his head in royal solitude
Above his peers, and looking grimly down
Over all Britain from his misty crown."

Thus spake the rhymer; and between them three
Was made a binding compact, suddenly,
That they should waken with the morning sun,
And journey northwards. As was said, was done.
Borne on the wings of steam, ten leagues an hour,
They called it slow, but blessed its mighty power;
And thought awhile, in pensive wonder dumb,
Of greater triumphs in the days to come,
When Distance (dim tradition of the Past,
Worn-out idea, too absurd to last)
Should bar no more the enterprise of man,
Nor Time compress his efforts to a span;
When docile lightnings, tethered to a wire,
Should turn to messengers at his desire,
And bearing thoughts from Europe to Cathay,
Start at the twilight and return ere day:
And of the social evils that should cease
In the new age of intercourse and peace;
When War, old tyrant, bloody-faced and pale,
Should yield his breath, run over on the rail;—
Crushed by the car of Steam, no more to rise
To fill the world with tears and agonies.

Short was their stay, nor turned they ev'n aside
To view the mighty city of the Clyde,

The great metropolis of plodding folk,
Tall chimneys, cotton, enterprise, and smoke;
But bound for Crinan while the morn was new,
Bade to the lovely Firth a fond adieu.

Clear was the sky; the sea reflected back
The morning lustre, as they held their track
By Rothesay, through the Kyles; and evermore
Some varied beauty wooed them from the shore
To gaze upon it. Green hills speck'd with sheep,
Or jutting rocks that nodded o'er the deep;
And, here and there, some mighty boulder stone,
Rolled from a precipice to stand alone—
Memento of convulsions that had wrung
The hills to agony when earth was young.

High to the south, majestic Arran rear'd
Its jagged peaks, storm-battered, riv'n, and seared;
And blue Lochfine, enswathed by mountains dun,
Displayed her teeming bosom to the sun,
And raised her ripples to reflect the light,
While graceful sea-gulls plumed in snowy white,
Followed the creaming furrow of the prow
With easy pinion pleasurably slow,

Then on the waters floated like a fleet
Of tiny vessels, argosies complete,
Such as brave Gulliver, deep wading, drew
Victorious from the ports of Blefuscu.

And sweet to these rejoicing mariners
Were Crinan's banks, o'ergrown with sunny furze,
With berried brambles, spotted foxglove bells,
Like Mab's pagodas built on pigmy fells,
With hawthorn bushes, purple-crested heath,
And orchis and anemones beneath
In plenteous beauty. Disembarking here,
Fresh for the exercise, and full of cheer,
They walked rejoicing onward, staff in hand,
Across the isthmus, nine good miles of land,
And left the lingering track-boat in the locks,
While they went scrambling over briery rocks
For heather sprigs, to grace their caps of blue;
Then on again, rejoicing in the view
Of fertile valleys dotted black with kine,
And hills knee-deep in tamarisk and pine;
Discoursing as they went of mica schist,
The old red sandstone, and the great "Fire mist"
Of nebulæ—exploded; and the birth,

Myriads of ages past, of a young earth;—
Still young and fresh, though venerably old;
And of the wondrous tale in "Cosmos" told,
Of heavenly architecture infinite,
Suns, systems, groups, revolving in the light
Of beauty eternal, and eternal law;—
Of infinite love, magnificence, and awe.

And thus the hours were rapidly consumed
In furnace of their thought, and toil entombed
In mental working; so that when the sea
Burst on their startled vision suddenly,
They doubted if their eyes beheld indeed
Loch Crinan, and those seas that, like a mead
Sprinkled with flow'rs, were studded o'er with isles:
But soon they knew them gleaming in the smiles
Of an unclouded sun; and once again
Stepping on ship-board, steamed along the main.

Most lovely! oh! most beautiful and grand
Were all the scenes of this romantic land!
Isle after isle, with grey empurpled rocks,
Breasted in steadfast majesty the shocks,
Stupendous, of the wild Atlantic wave;
Many a desolate sonorous cave

Re-echoed through its inmost vaults profound,
The mighty diapason and full sound
Of Corryvreckan—awful orator—
Preaching to lonely isles with eloquent roar;
Many a mountain reared its lordly crest,
Bronzed or empurpled by the radiant west;
Many a hill-girt loch indented far
The mainland; many a high and frowning scaur,
The haunt of sea-fowl, raised its barren form,
Furrowed with age, defiant of the storm;
And over all this hazy realm was spread
A halo of sad memories of the dead:
Of mournful love-tales; of old tragedies,
Filling the heart with pity, and the eyes
With tears, at bare remembrance; and old songs
Of love's endurance, love's despair, love's wrongs
And triumph o'er all obstacles at last;
And all the grief and passion of the past.
Invoking these to daylight from the womb
Of dim tradition, into fuller bloom
Of their fresh fancy, greater ravishment
Was it to them to ponder as they went,
Upon each legend in its own sad place,
To which it lent a beauty and a grace.

And when they reached the rock-bound shore of Mull,
A land of driving sleets and vapours dull,
But filled with mournful grandeur and austere
Magnificence, the Western wave shone clear
In the last beams of day. The dying light,
Ere it departed, swathed each mountain height
In robes of purple; and adown the west,
Where sea and sky seemed mingling—breast to breast—
Drew the dense banks of ponderous clouds, and spread
A mantle o'er them of a royal red,
Belted with purple—lined with amber—tinged
With fiery gold—and blushing-purple fringed.

And gorgeous was it o'er the Western Isles
To gaze upon the sunset mid those piles
Of mountainous clouds. They reared their sunny copes
Like heavenly alps, with cities on their slopes,
Built amid glaciers—bristling fierce with towers,
Turrets, and battlements of warlike powers—
Jagged with priestly pinnacles and spires—
And crowned with domes, that glittered in the fires
Of the slant sun, like smithied silver bright;—
The capitals of Cloudland. When the light
Grew paler, and the Eastern dark came down,

And o'er the mystery drew his mantle brown,
'T was lovely still to watch the shore and sea
Robed in the garment of obscurity;
To see the head-lands looming through the mist,
As if dissevered from the earth, they wist
Not altogether of which element
They were a part, indissolubly blent.

The lights of Oban glimmer'd faint and far,
And over Cruachan shone out one star
Attendant on the moon; who, issuing forth
Yellow and full, displayed to all the north
Her matron face, and o'er each eastern hill
Poured sleepy lustre. Beautifully still
Lay Lochlin in her beams—Lochlin whose breast
Wafted so oft the chieftains of the west
To bloody warfare; Lochlin that of yore
The galleys of the Gael to battle bore
Against the men of haughty Innisfail;
Lochlin of storms, where Fingal spread his sail
To meet Cuchullin; Lochlin of the spears;
Blue Lochlin of the songs of other years.
A mournful sea it was, a mournful shore;
But yet so lovely, vestured in the hoar

Antiquity of many memories,
That they regretted when their watchful eyes
Descried Fortwilliam and their journey's end,
And great Ben Nevis, corried, strath'd, and glenn'd,
Rising before them. Soon the sorrow pass'd,—
For they had reached a resting place at last,
Where for a season they might feed Delight
On Beauty, and in worldly Care's despite
Give themselves up to Nature—not in part,
But with all energy of mind and heart—
That ere returning to the world again
That little month might make them better men.
And what they talked of, what they dreamed or sung,
What tales they told, or beads of fancy strung,
What aspirations of a better time,
They formed for men, behold in rhythm and rhyme.

THE MAN IN THE DEAD SEA.

AN APOLOGUE.

WALKING on the Dead Sea shore,
Meditating evermore,
Underneath the burning ray
Of intolerable day,
I beheld a fearful thing—
    Bloody deed as e'er was done,
Wrought, unblushing, unrelenting,
    In the presence of the sun.

Fair, and young, and bright was he,
Who that morning walked with me,
By the margin of the sea;
Calm, and eloquent, and wise,
    Radiant in immortal youth;
Knowledge sparkled from his eyes,
    From his forehead living truth.

He was a youth indeed divine,
A master and a friend of mine,
For whose dear sake I would have given
All on the mortal side of heaven.

We talked together and paced along;
We did no mortal creature wrong;
And sometimes sitting on the sands,
    Or on the jutting rocks below,
He looked at me, and clasped my hands,
    And told me things I ought to know—
Things of heaven and things of earth,
Things of wisdom and of mirth;
The wisdom cheerful, the mirth most wise,
And both brimful of mysteries.

There came a woman by the way,
    A stately woman, proud and strong;
Her robe of purple velvet shone,
Like a starry night, with precious stone,
    And trailed the sands as she swept along.
She wore a dagger at her side,
    Jewel-hilted, bright, and keen:
You might have told, by her crown of gold,
    This gorgeous woman was a queen.

But more by her eyes, that flashed the fire
    Of one accustomed to control;
To rule in awe, and give the law
    That binds the body and the soul.
And, in her train, there followed her
    A well-armed troop of stalwart men,
So bloody and bare, I do not care
    Ever to see their like again.

My friend arose and looked at her;
    Calm and beautiful he stood,
With such magnificence of eye,
    As God but gives unto the good.
She scowled at him; each quivering limb
    In all her body spoke her wrath;
And her fearful tongue loud curses flung
    At the mild presence in her path:
"Monster of evil! fiend of guile!
    What brings thee here to blast my sight?
But since thou darest in the day,
To meet and brave me in the way,
    We'll try thy power—we'll know thy right."

"Lady," said he, and mildly spoke,
    While heavenly beauty lit his face,
"My God hath made me what I am,
    And given me an abiding place;

And if my presence please thee not,
The world is wide—thou need'st not come,
To slay me in each quiet spot,
Where I have sanctified a home.
Thou 'st taken from me wide domains,
And followed me with hate and scorn;
Enjoy thine own—let me alone—
I wait in patience for the morn."

A frenzy flushed her burning brow,
A rage too mighty to contain;
Her nostrils widened, and seemed to smoke;
She grasped her neck as she would choke,
And then, like one who suffered pain,
Her trembling lips she did compress;
Her cheeks grew cold and colourless.
But soon the madness of her blood
Boiled in her bosom where she stood;
Her eyes seemed coals of living flame,
And incoherent curses came,
Gasping and gurgling, from her mouth.
Never tornado of the south
Made half the wreck as, in that hour,
She would have made had she the power.

My friend stood by, with folded arms,
    Serene, and innocent, and pure;
And when she saw that he but smiled
    At all her hate, she could endure
No longer on his face to look,
    But smote it with her jewelled hand:
"Insensate wretch!" she fiercely said,
    "Let me not slay thee where I stand;
I will not stab thee to the heart,
    Lest, in my haste, I mar delight,
And thou shouldst die and end thy pain
    Too suddenly before my sight.
Not yet thy venomous blood shall flow,
But I *will* slay thee ere I go!"

Her body-guards, so fierce and grim,
Seized his arms and pinioned him;
And every one, with his gauntlet on,—
    An iron gauntlet, heavy to bear,—
Smote him on his cheeks and eyes,
    And bruised his lips, so ruddy fair,
Till the blood started and over-dyed
    The bloom of his face with gory red.
And then they spat on him in spite,
    And heaped foul curses on his head.

And he—what could he do but pray,
    And let them work their cruel will?—
Turned his looks to the judging sky,
    Appealing, though forgiving still.

Then from his lily skin they tore
Every vestment that he bore;
Smote him, threw him on the ground,
And his limbs with fetters bound;
Naked, helpless, and forlorn,
Mark for all their wrath and scorn;
And, with lying words, accused
    Of every shame, deceit, and crime;
And, when once he strove to speak,
    Filled his mouth with sand and slime;
Stamping on him as he lay,
Bound and bleeding on the way.
And I, alas! alone, alone!
Could but curse them and bemoan
That I could not, as I trod,
Grasp th' avenging bolts of God.

And as he lay upon the beach,
Deprived of motion and of speech,

The queen, that woman so proud and fierce,
Looked upon him with feverish joy;
Her fiery glances seemed to pierce
Through and through the bleeding boy.
She put her hand on his naked breast,
And felt his heart: "Ah! well," said she;
"It beats and beats, but shall not beat
To vex me thus incessantly."
And she drew the poniard from her side,
Slowly, calmly, sheath and all;
Unsheathed it—felt if its edge was sharp,
And dipped its point in poisonous gall;
And, kneeling down, with flashing face,
Gazed upon him, in that place.

She did *not* stab him: she grasped his flesh
As if she'd tear it from his bones;
Then took the slime from his bleeding mouth,
That she might hear his piteous groans.
He faintly said, "Thou canst not kill;
My charmed life defies thy will."
"I can," she answered—whispering low;—
"This is the death that thou shalt know.

Thy days are numbered—thy race is run;
Thou art an insult to the sun."
And in his breast, up to the hilt,
She plunged the dagger, and wrenched it round,
Then drew it out with a joyous cry,
And pointed to the ghastly wound;
Then drove it in again—again,
With force redoubled every time;
And left it sticking in his heart
For very luxury of crime.

Sense and motion left his frame,
From his lips no breathing came:
"He's dead," quoth she; "he's dead at last,
And all my agony is past.
Take him up, let the Dead Sea wave
Float him about without a grave;
Take him up, and throw him in.
In these waters none can sink;
Mid the foul naphtha let him swim,
To gorge the vultures, limb by limb,
When they come to the water's brink;
And if they come not, let him lie,
Rotting betwixt the wave and sky;—

Take him by the heels and chin,
And spit on him, and cast him in."

They twined their coarse hands in his hair;
They took his body so white and fair;
They spat upon his patient face,
Pale, but filled with heavenly grace;
They took him up, and in the sea,
They cast him ignominiously.
And the fearful woman, proud and strong,
The fiendish woman who did the wrong,
Bade clarion sound, and trumpet play,
And went exulting on her way.

A sudden wind—a treacherous wind
    Arose upon that Dead Sea shore;
The heavy waves began to swell,
    To chafe, and foam, and lash, and roar;
A gloom o'erspread the clear blue sky:—
Once alone I could descry
His fair white limbs go floating by
    On the crest of a distant wave;
And I sat me down upon the sand,
Wailing that I, with strong right hand,
    Had not snatched him from the grave,

And smitten the murderess to the dust
Ere she sacrificed the just.

All that day the storm blew high,
    And all that day I lingered there;
There was no living thing but I
On the shore of that sad sea,
And I was moaning piteously.
    Towards the night the wind blew fair,
And the silver rim of the bright new moon
    Shone in a deep cerulean air,
And looked at itself in the salt lagoon.
And there was silence, cold as death;
Not a motion but my breath.

Long I sat upon the shore,
    Brooding on that cruel wrong,
Wondering if for evermore
    The evil thing should be the strong;
When I heard a sudden sound
    In the waters far away,
And saw a phosphorescent track
On the breast of the waves so dull and black.

I listened—I could plainly hear
The measured stroke, precise and clear,
Of a swimmer swimming near:—
I looked—I saw the floating locks,
The face upturned, the bosom brave,
The calm, full eyes, that looked on me,
Through the darkness of the sea;
The strong limbs, battling with the wave:—
I saw the motion—I heard the breath,
I knew his victory over death.

It was my friend—my living friend;
I clasped him, clad him, wept for joy.
"They may think," he said, "to strike me dead;
They can but wound me—not destroy.
The strongest bands, the fastest chain
On my free limbs will not remain;
For the deepest wounds that hate can strike
I find a healing in the air;
Even poisoned weapons cannot kill;
They 're powerless 'gainst the life I bear.
And she, whose hate pursues me still,
A queen superb, of lofty line,
Shall have her day—then fade away,
And all her empire shall be mine."

ETERNAL JUSTICE.

THE man is thought a knave or fool,
Or bigot, plotting crime,
Who, for the advancement of his kind,
Is wiser than his time.
For him the hemlock shall distil;
For him the axe be bared;
For him the gibbet shall be built;
For him the stake prepared:
Him shall the scorn and wrath of men
Pursue with deadly aim;
And malice, envy, spite, and lies,
Shall desecrate his name.
But truth shall conquer at the last,
For round and round we run,
And ever the right comes uppermost,
And ever is justice done.

Pace through thy cell, old Socrates,
Cheerily to and fro;
Trust to the impulse of thy soul
And let the poison flow.
They may shatter to earth the lamp of clay
That holds a light divine,
But they cannot quench the fire of thought
By any such deadly wine:
They cannot blot thy spoken words
From the memory of man,
By all the poison ever was brewed
Since time its course began.
To-day abhorred, to-morrow adored,
So round and round we run,
And ever the truth comes uppermost,
And ever is justice done.

Plod in thy cave grey Anchorite;
Be wiser than thy peers;
Augment the range of human power,
And trust to coming years.
They may call thee wizard, and monk accursed,
And load thee with dispraise:
Thou wert born five hundred years too soon
For the comfort of thy days.

But not too soon for human kind:
    Time hath reward in store;
And the demons of our sires become
    The saints that we adore.
The blind can see, the slave is lord;
    So round and round we run;
And ever the wrong is proved to be wrong,
    And ever is justice done.

Keep, Galileo, to thy thought,
    And nerve thy soul to bear;
They may gloat o'er the senseless words they wring
    From the pangs of thy despair:
They may veil their eyes, but they cannot hide
    The sun's meridian glow;
The heel of a priest may tread thee down,
    And a tyrant work thee woe;
But never a truth has been destroyed:
    They may curse it and call it crime;
Pervert and betray, or slander and slay
    Its teachers for a time.
But the sunshine aye shall light the sky,
    As round and round we run;
And the truth shall ever come uppermost,
    And justice shall be done.

And live there *now* such men as these—
With thoughts like the great of old?
Many have died in their misery,
And left their thought untold;
And many live, and are ranked as mad,
And placed in the cold world's ban,
For sending their bright far-seeing souls
Three centuries in the van.
They toil in penury and grief,
Unknown, if not maligned;
Forlorn, forlorn, bearing the scorn
Of the meanest of mankind.
But yet the world goes round and round,
And the genial seasons run,
And ever the truth comes uppermost,
And ever is justice done.

NOW.

THE venerable Past—is past;
'T is dark, and shines not in the ray:
'T was good, no doubt—'t is gone at last—
There dawns another day.
Why should we sit where ivies creep,
And shroud ourselves in charnels deep;
Or the world's yesterdays deplore,
Mid crumbling ruins' mossy hoar?
Why should we see with dead men's eyes,
Looking at WAS from morn to night,
When the beauteous Now, the divine To BE,
Woo with their charms our living sight?
Why should we hear but echoes dull
When the world of sound, so beautiful,
Will give us music of our own?
Why in the darkness will we grope,
When the sun, in heaven's resplendent cope,
Shines as bright as ever it shone?

Abraham saw no brighter stars
    Than those which burn for thee and me.
When Homer heard the lark's sweet song,
    Or night-bird's lovelier melody,
They were such sounds as Shakspere heard,
Or Chaucer, when he blessed the bird;
Such lovely sounds as we can hear.
Great Plato saw the vernal year
Send forth its tender flowers and shoots,
And luscious autumn pour its fruits;
And we can see the lilies blow,
The corn-fields wave, the rivers flow:
For us all bounties of the earth,
For us its wisdom, love, and mirth,
If we daily walk in the sight of God,
And prize the gifts He has bestowed.

We will not dwell amid the graves,
    Nor in dim twilights sit alone,
To gaze at moulder'd architraves,
    Or plinths and columns overthrown;
We will not only see the light
    Through painted windows, cobwebb'd o'er,
Nor know the beauty of the night
    Save by the moonbeam on the floor:

But in the presence of the sun,
    Or moon, or stars, our hearts shall glow;
We 'll look at nature face to face,
    And we shall LOVE because we KNOW.
The present needs us. Every age
Bequeaths the next for heritage
No lazy luxury or delight—
But strenuous labour for the right;
For *Now*, the child and sire of Time
    Demands the deeds of earnest men
To make it better than the past,
    And stretch the circle of its ken.

Now is a fact that men deplore,
Though it might bless them evermore,
Would they but fashion it aright:
'T is ever new, 't is ever bright.
    Time, nor Eternity, hath seen
A repetition of delight
    In all its phases: ne'er hath been
For men or angels that which *is;*
    And that which *is* hath ceased to be
Ere we have breathed it, and its place
    Is lost in the Eternity.

But *Now* is ever good and fair,
Of the Infinitude the heir,
And we of it. So let *us* live
That from the Past we may receive
Light for the Now—from Now a joy
That Fate nor Time shall e'er destroy.

THE VISION OF MOCKERY.

All happy things are earnest. Once I roamed
In England, or in Dreamland, through the streets
Of a huge, buzzing, dense, metropolis.
Slowly, in teeming thoroughfares, I walked
One of the people, hearing with their ears,
Beholding with their eyes, and in their thought
Divining, till my soul was filled with grief
At all that I beheld, and felt, and knew.

It was a gibing, laughing, sneering crowd,
Devoid of truth, faith, love, and earnestness,
Except a horrid earnestness for gain;
Fierce love of lucre, which, if one had not,
He was despised and trodden down of men:
Which, if one had, he was adored of all,
Placed on a pinnacle to be admired,
Flattered, and filled with other rich men's gifts;
His overflowing fulness made more full,

His vulgarness thought choice gentility,
His vices virtues, and his prejudice
Wisdom innate, his coarse words oracles,
And he a chief and model of mankind.

But for all else than wealth these swarming crowds
Had slight regard; and when their daily toil
In search of it was done, and time hung loose,
They gathered in their clubs and theatres,
In market-place, or corner of the streets,
And mocked and gibed, and held the best buffoon
The wisest man, so he but made them laugh.
Nothing was holy to these wretched crowds,
But all things food for jest and ribald wit,
Caricature, lampoon, and mockery.
I said to one, "Is this the end of life?
Is there no reverence for God or man?"
He turned and looked, and with a well-bred stare,
Eyed me askance: "What would you have?" quoth he;
"We keep our reverence for sabbath-days,
And look demure the seventh part of our time.
If for six days we toil, six nights we laugh,
And who shall blame us? What new bore art thou,
From lands hyperborean, that canst think

Laughter a crime?" "Nay," I replied, "not so;
Laughter is virtuous, if there be a cause:
But mockery!"—Thereat he smiled again,
Arching his eyebrows, that his eyes, full-stretched,
Might take the measure of my littleness,
And disappeared amid the gathering throng.

I spake no more, but wandered wearily on,
Until I reached a wide and crowded mart,
Where one, a mild and venerable man,
Addressed the multitude with slow, clear voice.
Few gave him audience; but he heeded not,
And spoke his thought, unmindful of the jeers
Of would-be wits, and shallow mountebanks,
Scoffers and punsters, and obese dull clowns.

"Vain and unhappy multitudes," he said,
That gibe and sneer at every holy thing,
Is this your law of life? Is this the end?
Lo! ye have souls immortal and sublime,
To be made infinite in love and light,
And heavenly knowledge, if ye will but ope
The inner fountains and the inner eyes,
And see the deep and full significance,
The worth and wherefore of the life of man.

Is it not sad, O myriad, myriad souls,
Infinite and immortal as ye are,
That ye will make your own infinity
A retrogression? Immortality,
Change of vile vesture for a viler still?
That ye will circle with the feculent clay
Your life-light heavenly clear, until it burn
No fairer, to the outward world, than foul,
Thick exhalations of a stagnant fen?
Is it not sad, that germs which should expand,
Even here, to trees of bole magnificent,
Should rot and perish in unsavoury mire;
Or, ere they rot, be eaten up by swine,—
Swine of ill-passion, selfishness, and lust?
Is it not sad—a thing for bitter tears—
Unless for hope, and efforts made more strong
By seeming hopelessness—that men should live
And never know the meaning of their life?
That they should die, and never know that death
Is change, not ceasing; and that life and death
Are ebb and flow of an eternal tide,
In which the ripple may become a wave,
The wave a sea, the sea a universe?

"Alas! poor crowds! self-quenched, self-sacrificed,
Why will ye crawl, when ye might walk erect?
Why will ye grovel, when ye might aspire?
Why will ye don foul rags, when ye might wear
Angelic vestments? Why co-herd with beasts,
And graze in fields, or wallow in the mire,
When ye might feed on manna dropped from heaven?"

Thereat a listener in the crowd exclaimed—
One with a portly paunch, and large round face,
And little twinkling eyes,—"You waste your words:
Why do you preach to us of things like these,
Things transcendental and absurdly wise?
The earth is man's; man is the earth's. Forget
These idle dreams; and eat, and drink, and laugh,
And speculate, and hoard a heap of gold;
And so be one of us, that as you live
You may enjoy; and when you die, die well,
Leaving plump money-bags to bless your sons."
And all the people laughed, and cried, "Hear! hear!"
With loud applause, and shouts vociferous.
But still the orator undaunted stood,
Though laughter sputtered round him, and vain scoffs,
Like muddy showerlets, fell on every side;

And more he would have said, but that a cry
Of one in haste, and in great stress of speech,
Made interruption: "Lo! the children die!
The little children, and you heed them not.
The children die: they perish, body and soul,
In pestilent lanes, and rotting alleys vile;
Thousands on thousands, more than eyes can count.
God's sun shines on them, but they never heard
His name who made it: the fair world they tread
Is foul to them that never saw the fields,
The green trees, the great mountains, the bright streams,
Or knew that God, who fashioned all things, loves
All he has made, and children most of all,
The purest from his hand. Why should they die?
For life in ignorance is very death.
Some of them toil, and waste their tender limbs
In mills, or mines, from morn till past the night:
Machines of flesh, too sorely overwrought
To reach maturity ere they grow old.
Some of them toil not, but by night and day
Prowl in the fetid ways, and lie, and steal,
And curse; and never know that words can bless,
Or that such thing as blessing in this world
Was ever heard of:—Save, oh! save them all:

If not for their sakes, for our own! Not one
Of all these myriads, were we truly wise,
Should perish thus. For, though they live in shame,
And fill the world with crimes and miseries,
Great is their sorrow, but the guilt is ours."

He ceased, and through the crowd a murmur ran,
As though his words had moved them to remorse,
Or pity—but it died away; and one
Speaking for many, as if he alone
Were mouth-piece and interpreter of men,
Exclaimed in pompous wise, "Why should we heed?
Why interfere? It is a perilous thing
To step between a parent and its child.
Each for himself; each father for his own:
No good can come of such philosophy.
It weighs all things in theoretic scales,
And meddles but to mar. The world is good;
Let it alone: 'twill educate itself."
He ceased, and looked about him with a smile
That said, as plainly as a smile can say,
How smart he was, how practically wise
Whereat another, taking up the chant,
Said, "Bah! it irks my patience evermore,

To hear such vulgar flattery of the crowd;
Were they not born to drudge, to groan, to sweat?
Is't not so written in the Book? If so,
Why give them knowledge they can never use?
A little of it is a poisonous thing,
And much is utterly beyond their reach;—
So, prithee, Master Quack, let well alone.
If thou canst sing for our amusement, sing;
Or dance, then dance; or jest, then jest away;
Stand on thy head, cut capers in the air,
Or any thing thou wilt but preach of this."
Thereat the crowd laughed as with one accord;
And when the earnest man again essayed
To speak his truth, they raised derisive shouts
That stifled all his words upon his lips,
And filled his heart and mine with pity and grief.

What more was said I know not, nor how long
I stood amongst them; but a sudden cry,
And rushing of the people to one place,
Aroused me from my lethargy, and, lo!
I heard a voice potential with the crowd,
Coarse and stentorian, breaking on my ear:

"Behold!" it said, "behold the game of games.
The chance of chances—better than all trade,
Commerce, or industry pursued by man.
Who plays it well grows wealthy in a day;
Who plays it ill may gain more great reward
Than Labour with his utmost pith and stress
Could sweat for in a life." And as he spake,
Loose scraps of paper fluttered in his hands.
There seemed deep fascination in the sight,
For every eye beseeched, and every tongue
Implored him for them. From his vulgar clutch
They dropped like flakes of snow innumerous.
And then the scramble and the crash began;
Old men and young, the famished and the full,
The rich and poor, widow, and wife, and maid,
Master and servant, all with one intent
Rushed on the paper; from their eager eyes
Flashing a fierce, unconquerable greed,
Their hot palms itching, all their being filled
With one desire; so that amid the press
If some were crushed and smitten to the ground
They heeded not, but trod on fallen heads
As unconcernedly as racing steeds
Trample the sward. And still the paper flakes

Fell fast around; and still the crowd rushed on,
Roaring and wild, their myriad hands held up
To grasp the glittering prizes ere they fell.
Then came a pause. A fearful mockery
Began to spread. Each called his fellow—fool!
And every fool acknowledged—so he was,
But thought his neighbour greater fool than he.
And there was laughter loud, and stifled groans,
And shouts obstreperous, till all at once
They dropped the scraps of paper from their hands,
As if a leprosy was in its touch;
And in their haste, o'er eager to depart
From that gross presence, trod each other down.

As in a burning theatre, a crowd
Rushing by hundreds to one narrow door,
Meet certain death to flee uncertain fire;
So they in panic at the lust of gain,
That each man saw in others, not in self,
Fled in confusion, breathless and distraught,
Nor cared who died, if they themselves escaped
I stood amazed, and blushed for human-kind,
When on my ears a strain of music broke,
Melting in soft harmonious cadences.

I looked, and on a platform raised on high,
Beheld a lady beauteous as the dawn,
Dancing in robes of white and azure gauze;
Her breast was bare; her limbs nor bare, nor hid,
But full defined through her transparent robes,
Filled the beholders with voluptuous thoughts.
She seemed to float upon the buoyant air,
To be a creature of an element
More spiritual than earth; and when she smiled
There was such witchery in her painted cheeks,
That all the crowd, entranced with great delight,
And quite forgetful of their past distress,
Shouted with loud acclaim, and clapped their hands.
And when she twirl'd upon her pliant toe,
One fair limb vertical, the other raised
To horizontal straightness, such a burst
Of irrepressible, overpowering joy,
Filled all the air, it seemed as men were mad,
And dancing were supremest bliss of earth;—
The fairest dancer, first of woman-kind.
Then as she curtsied with a winning look
To her idolaters, a shower of wreaths,
Garlands, and evergreens, and laurel crowns,
Fell all around her, and another burst

Of universal gladness rang around;
And she, descending from her platform, slid
Graceful into her chariot, and the crowd
Filled with new frenzy at her loveliness,
Unyoked her prancing jennets, dapple-grey,
And drew her forth triumphant to her home.

Still more amazed, I left this fearful crowd,
And wandered out amid the quiet woods
To hold communion with my secret soul,
And note, in Memory's many-storied book,
What I had seen and heard—that pondering well
Its true significance, I might extract
Good from the ill, and from the darkness light.

WE ARE WISER THAN WE KNOW.

THOU, who in the midnight silence
Lookest to the orbs on high,
Feeling humbled, yet elated,
In the presence of the sky;
Thou, who minglest with thy sadness
Pride ecstatic, awe divine,
That ev'n *thou* canst trace their progress
And the law by which they shine—
Intuition shall uphold thee,
Even though reason drag thee low;
Lean on faith, look up rejoicing,
We are wiser than we know.

Thou, who hearest plaintive music,
Or sweet songs of other days;
Heaven-revealing organs pealing,
Or clear voices hymning praise,
And wouldst weep, thou know'st not wherefore,

Though thy soul is steep'd in joy;
And the world looks kindly on thee,
And thy bliss hath no alloy—
Weep, nor seek for consolation,
Let the heaven-sent droplets flow,
They are hints of mighty secrets,
We are wiser than we know.

Thou, who in the noon-time brightness
Seest a shadow undefined;
Hear'st a voice that indistinctly
Whispers caution to thy mind:
Thou, who hast a vague foreboding
That a peril may be near,
Even when Nature smiles around thee,
And thy Conscience holds thee clear—
Trust the warning—look before thee—
Angels may the mirror show,
Dimly still, but sent to guide thee,
We are wiser than we know

Countless chords of heavenly music,
Struck ere earthly time began,
Vibrate in immortal concord
To the answering soul of man:

Countless rays of heavenly glory
Shine through spirit pent in clay,
On the wise men at their labours,
On the children at their play.
Man has gazed on heavenly secrets,
Sunned himself in heavenly glow,
Seen the glory, heard the music,
We are wiser than we know.

THE PHANTOMS OF ST. SEPULCHRE.*

"Didst ever see a hanging?" "No, not one;
Nor ever wish to see such scandal done.
But once I saw a wretch condemned to die:
A lean-faced, bright-eyed youth; who made me sigh
At the recital of a dream he had.
He was not sane—and yet he was not mad;
Fit subject for a mesmerist he seemed;
For when he slept, he saw; and when he dreamed,
His visions were as palpable to him
As facts to us. My memory is dim
Upon his story, but I 'll ne'er forget
The dream he told me, for it haunts me yet,

* It may be necessary to inform the reader, unacquainted with London, that the church of St. Sepulchre is close to the jail of Newgate; and that its bell is tolled when a criminal is executed. *Few* will need to be reminded that the three stories related are not fabulous.

Impressed upon me by his earnest faith
That 't was no vision, but a sight which Death
Opened his eyes to see,—an actual glimpse
Into the world of spectres and of imps,
Vouchsafed to him on threshold of the grave—
List! and I 'll give it, in the words he gave:—

"Ay, you may think that I am crazed,
But what I saw, that did I see.
These walls are thick, my brain was sick,
And yet mine eyes saw lucidly.
Through the joists and through the stones
I could look as through a glass;
And from this dungeon, damp and cold,
I watched the motley people pass.
All day long, rapid and strong,
Rolled to and fro the living stream;
But in the night, I saw a sight—
I cannot think it was a dream.

"Old St. Sepulchre's bell will toll
At eight to-morrow, for my soul;
And thousands, not much better than I,
Will throng around to see me die;

And many will bless their happy fate,
That they ne'er fell from their high estate,
Or did such deed as I have done;
Though, from the rise to the set of sun,
They cheat their neighbours all their days,
And gather gold in slimy ways.
But my soul feels strong, and my sight grows clear,
As my death-hour approaches near,
And in its presence I will tell
The very truth, as it befel.

"The snow lies now on the house-tops cold,
Shrill, and keen the March winds blow;
The rank grass of the churchyard mould
Is covered o'er with drifted snow;
The graves in old St. Sepulchre's yard
Were white last night, when I looked forth,
And the sharp clear stars seemed to dance in the sky,
Rocked by the fierce winds of the north.

"The houses dull seemed numb with frost,
The streets seemed wider than of yore,
And the straggling passengers trod, like ghosts,
Silently on the pathway frore,

When I look'd through that churchyard rail,
And thought of the bell that should ring my doom,
And saw three women, sad and pale,
Sitting together on a tomb.

"A fearful sight it was to see,
As up they rose and looked at me:
Sunken were their cheeks and eyes,
Blue-cold were their feet, and bare;
Lean and yellow were their hands,
Long and scanty was their hair;
And round their necks I saw the ropes
Deftly knotted, tightly drawn;
And knew they were not things of earth,
Or creatures that could face the dawn.

"Seen dimly in th' uncertain light,
They multiplied upon my sight;
And things like men and women sprung—
Shapes of those who had been hung—
From the rank and clammy ground.
I counted them—I knew them all,
Each with its rope around its neck,
Marshalled by the churchyard wall.

"The stiff policeman, passing along,
Saw them not, nor made delay;
A reeling bacchanal, shouting a song,
Looked at the clock, and went his way;
A troop of girls, with painted cheeks,
Laughing and yelling in drunken glee,
Passed like a gust, and never looked
At the sight so palpable to me.
I saw them—heard them—felt their breath
Musty and raw and damp as death.

"These women three, these fearful shapes,
Looked at me through Newgate stone,
And raised their fingers, skinny and lank,
Whispering low in under tone:—
'His hour draws near,—he 's one of us,—
His gibbet is built,—his noose is tied;
They have put his name on his coffin lid:
The law of blood shall be satisfied.
He shall rest with us, and his name shall be
A by-word and a mockery.'

"I whispered to one, 'What hadst thou done?'
She answered, whispering, and I heard—
Although a chime rang at the time—
Every sentence, every word,

Clear, above the pealing bells :—
'I was mad, and slew my child;
Better than life, God knows, I loved it;
But pain and hunger drove me wild.
Scorn and hunger, and grief and care,
And I slew it in my despair.
And for this deed they raised the gibbet;
For this deed the noose they tied;
And I hung and swung in the sight of men,
And the law of blood was satisfied.'

"I said to the second, 'What didst thou?'
Her keen eyes flashed unearthly shine.
'I married a youth when I was young,
And thought all happiness was mine;
But they stole him from me, to fight the French;
And I was left in the world alone,
To beg or steal—to live or die,
Robbed of my stay, my all, my own.
England stole my lord from me,—
I stole a ribbon, was caught and tried;
And I hung and swung in the sight of men,
And the law of blood was satisfied.'

"I said to the third, 'What crime was thine?'
'Crime!' she answered, in accents meek,
'The babe that sucks at its mother's breast,
And smiles with its little dimpled cheek,
Is not more innocent than I.
But truth was feeble,—error was strong;
And guiltless of a deed of shame,
Men's justice did me cruel wrong.
They would not hear my truthful words;
They thought me filled with stubborn pride.
And I hung and swung in the sight of men,
And the law of blood was satisfied.'

"Then one and all, by that churchyard wall,
Raised their skinny hands at me;
Their voices mingling like the sound
Of rustling leaves in a withering tree:
'His hour has come, he's one of us;
His gibbet is built, his noose is tied;
His knell shall ring, and his corpse shall swing,
And the law of blood shall be satisfied.'

"They vanished! I saw them, one by one,
With their bare blue feet on the drifted snow,
Sink like a thaw, when the sun is up,
To their wormy solitudes below.

Though *you* may deem this was a dream,
My facts are tangible facts to me;
For the sight grows clear as death draws near,
And looks into futurity."

THE CONFESSION.

I WAS betrayed, and cruelly undone.
Smitten to anguish in my sorest part,
And so disgusted with all human life,
That curses came spontaneous to my lips:
I cursed the day—I cursed my fellow-men;
I cursed my God, that made so bad a world.
Goaded to frenzy, by excess of pain,
I tore my hair,—I dashed my bleeding head
Against a wall; sobbed, wept, and gnashed my teeth.
I howled anathemas against myself
For being man, and living on the earth.
When suddenly a sweet and heavenly calm
Fell on my spirit; and a mild clear light
Diffused itself about me where I stood;
And I was conscious of a visible power
Unutterably great, divinely good;

And a voice spake, not angrily, but sad:
"*Weak and unjust! Thou hast blasphemed thy God;*
God, whom thou knowest not. Thou hast maligned
Thy fellow-men. Live, till thou knowest both."
The awful glory stole away my sense;
Th' excess of splendour dazzled my dim eyes;
The clear words made me dumb: and for a while
Torpid and clod-like on the earth I lay,
Till th' ineffable brightness disappeared.
And when I wakened, life was misery;
Burden too mighty for my flesh to bear.
"Live, till I know my God! That might I, well;
But live in sorrow till I know mankind?
Heavy the curse! But if it must be borne,
Let me gain knowledge quickly, and so die!"
Long did I live. One hundred years of time
I held the faith that all my people held;
Observed their laws, and to a God of FEAR
Knelt down in awe, and worshipped His dread name.
But still I lived, and cursed the weary days;
And had no love or reverence for my kind.
And still my pain grew with my discontent,
That I could not release myself, and die.

Youth in my limbs, but age upon my heart,
I roamed the earth. I dwelt among the Greeks:
I saw, well pleased, the majesty of life;
The power of beauty, and the sense of joy;
The physical grandeur of the earth and heaven.
But God himself was stranger to my thought:
I had a worship, but no inward faith;
I prayed to gods of human lineament,
Emblems of natural forces and desires;
I filled the woods with visionary shapes;
Peopled the hills, the vales, the rocks, the streams,
The dark caves, and the sunny mountain-tops
With forms of beauty; and conversed with them
Upon unseen, unreal phantasies,
Until they seemed so palpable to sight,
So like to men in passion, vice, and crime,
I loathed, and shuddered, and abhorred them all;—
Nor knew in what abysm and hell of thought
To sink remembrance. And I lived—and lived—
Longer than hope; and still I could not die.

Then far away into the burning east
I bent my steps. And at one drowsy noon,

Under a palm-tree shade, beside a well
Sat down, and groaned in bitterness of grief
That God was still an alien to my soul.
I cast my limbs upon the feverish ground,
And lay upon my face; and with my tears
Moistened the dust around me, praying still
That I might die; for I was sear of heart,
Old, miserably old, and most forlorn.
Thus lay I from the noon into the night,
And from the night into the sudden dawn;
And all that day I battened on my tears.
When, lo! there came a pilgrim by the way;
A pale, deject, and wiry-featured wretch;
With hands all sinewy, like a parrot's claws,
Thin lips, bright eyes, sunk cheeks, and grizzled hair.
There was a comfort in his hideousness,
As he sat down and gazed upon my grief,
And gave me pity, and contemptuous cheer.
"Brother," he said, "why what a fool art thou!
Neither in time, nor in eternity,
Neither in God, in nature, nor in man,
Is there aught worth the weeping of an hour.
'T is good to run, but better far to walk;

'T is good to walk, but better to sit still;
'T is good to stand, and wake, but better far
To lie and sleep, untroubled by a dream;
'T is good to be when thought has been destroyed;
Better, far better, never to have been.
The grass is happy; happier is the stone.
Highest of good is rest; rest so sublime,
So deep, so thorough, as to seem like death.
Be rest thy God. Let the winds moan, not thou;
Let the skies weep, but shed not thou a tear;
And sleep and fast thy troublous life away
In one most happy and incessant calm,
Till sweet annihilation blots thee out.
This is religion—this the only faith:
Bliss is absorption—heaven is nothingness."
He led me with his eye,—I followed him;
And I became a dull, insensate lump,
And dozed in Budha's temples night and day;
I bruised in mortar of my selfishness
All thoughts, all feeling, all desire, all vice,
All virtue, into one amorphous mass
Of apathy, and idiocy, and sloth.
How long I wallowed in this senseless sty

I never knew; I was but half alive,
And had no memory of time or change,
Only at intervals a grievous pain.

I was aroused at last, and scourged with whips,
Kicked, beaten, spat on, cast into the mire.
Change had come o'er the places where I dwelt;
There was new law for men, new faith for God;
The conqueror's sword had passed upon the plain,
And what was spared did homage for its life.
God and his Prophet were the Lords of earth.
And suddenly awaked, I found that I,
Even I, was living; that the world was new,
Though I was old, most lamentably old,
But still condemned to mingle with my kind,
And choose my faith. I did as others did;
Learned the new law, and thought I served my God.
I served him not. Obedience blind, inept,
Unthinking, dull, insensate, was the law:
Fate lorded over will; necessity
Turned men into machines. I cast my eyes
Despairing still upon the firmament,
Jewelled with worlds, and reasoned with myself,

If Fate or Will upheld them in their place;
And, in the infinite madness of my brain,
Conceived that each, majestic as it shone,
Was filled with misery and doubt like mine.
A rolling Hell set in the sky to preach
To other hells, as wretched as itself,
The dreadful power, the boundlessness of ill.
Long did I struggle with this deep despair,
And vehemently pray, both morn and night,
That I might be extinguished utterly;
That I might lay upon the arid soil
My lifeless bones, to feed the hungry roots
Of hemlock or mandragora with lime;
That I at least might end my doubts in death;
Though Death were but the gate to other worlds
Of spiritual anguish, more intense than this.

Another change came over me. Ere long
I wandered forth o'er Asiatic plains;
Dwelt with the lizard in the crumbling halls
Of antique cities desolate, whose names
Were lost from memory. I shared the tent
Of roving spearmen and banditti fierce,

So utter old and sad, that murderous thieves
Took pity on my want and misery,
And spake me kindly, even when they loathed.
I lay beneath the palms at set of sun,
And wished that ravenous and night-prowling beasts
Would tear me limb from limb before the dawn.
I crossed great deserts in the burning heat,
Forded strong rivers, pierced through trackless woods—
A thing so utter sad, that the lean wolves
Fled terror-smitten when they met my glance,
And hungry serpents hissed and slunk away.
How long the madness burned 't were vain to tell;
Time and Eternity seemed one to me.
But in a bright and lovely summer's morn
I felt my limbs supple and strong again,
As in my youth, ere grief and I were friends.
Far had I journeyed to an eastern clime,
'Mid an old people, and an older faith.
I found some comfort, yet I could not die.
Still was obedience law: childish and calm,
Not to a blind and cruel destiny,
But to the wise irrevocable rule
Of a just Deity, that made mankind,

And sent his clay vicegerents to the earth
To rule them justly, if they would submit
To walk for ever in the same dull track,
To live and act, from barren age to age,
In the same fashion, with the same desires,
Same thoughts, same habits, and same prejudice;
More dull and senseless than a stagnant mire
That even in its rottenness and sloth
Breeds something novel from its fruitful slime;—
But they bred nothing—only their dull selves;
And I despised them—hated them—and lived,
And knew by living I was still accursed,
And loved not God, nor yet my fellow-men.

There was no resting here: my fiery soul
Felt mortal anguish to co-herd with theirs.
I went again a wanderer o'er the earth,
Taking no heed of time, or place, or change,
But weary, weary, abject, and forlorn.

One year ago—'twas but one little year—
I entered, in my rags and squalidness,
A large, fair city of the populous west:
The church-bells rang; the people were astir,

In countless multitudes, through all the streets;
Gay banners flaunted in the morning air,
And waves of music, from the Gothic porch
Of a cathedral, rushed in floods divine;
Now in full tidal flow, and now in ebb,
So grand, so awe-inspiring, that even I,
Despised, abandoned, abject, and abhorred,
Felt holy joy to listen to the sound
Which soothed my spirit with melodious peace.
I listened long; for my sad heart was full.—
I could have floated painlessly to death,
And blessed the music with my latest sigh,—
But that a sudden plucking at the hem,
All mire-bedraggled, of my tattered robe,
Caused me to turn: I saw a fair young face,
Sweet even as hers who loved me in her youth—
She whom I now, for the first time, forgave
For wrongs inflicted on my trusting heart.
Like—but unlike; lovely—yet not so fair;
And at my miserable feet she knelt
To crave my blessing:—"Blessing! and from me?
From me, the vilest, meanest of mankind?"—
"Ay, and from thee!" she said; "we know thee well;
Thou hast long suffered—thou 'rt a saint of God."

And all the people, gathering round about,
Joined in her supplication; kneeling down,
To crave my blessing—not in mockery,
But with deep reverence. Strange it seemed that I
Who had not known for spanless gulfs of time
What blessing meant, should have the power to bless.
I could but bless her; for I felt my heart
Glow with dear memories forgotten long,
Brought back upon me by her mild sweet face.
The burden of my long-enduring pain
Was lightened by that pity, and I wept;
And every tear I shed became to me
Relief and joy, as, with an earnest voice,
I blessed the people, showing them the while
My own unworthiness more great than theirs—
Unmeet my lips to utter words of peace
Who long had cursed myself and all my kind.

And now the hoary portals opening wide,
Forth issued an array of robèd priests,
In white and scarlet; boys with censers flung
Rich incense in the air; while others hymned,
With sweet clear voice, "Hosanna to the Lord."
And all the people knelt, and with them I.

The solemn music filled the pliant air,
And a religious sense was wafted round,—
Sense superadded, and unfelt before.
I could not rise: my cramped and weary joints
Seemed bloodless as the stones on which I knelt;
And the procession and the people passed,
In all their gorgeousness;—and I was left
To my own strength, to follow if I list,
Or lie upon the pavement and expire.
I rose. I felt within my secret soul
More peace than had been mine since the great curse
Was spoken by the Presence for my sin.
But as I could not stay to be a saint,
And bear the flattery of the ignorant,
With a new courage I endued my heart,
And prayed for strength, and went upon my way.

Here am I now. In thy serene abode
I've gained new comfort from thy reverend lips,
And learned the secret of my destiny.
'T was thou that taught me from the blessed Book
That God was Love; and that those served Him best
Who loved their fellows, and obeyed the law

Sublime but easy, preached by Him who died
To seal his doctrine by his guiltless blood.

I have not long to live. My race is run:
I would live longer were it but to preach
To other souls as wretched as my own,
The mighty truth, that God is Love indeed,
But feel within me that mine hour is come.
I shall not see the morning dawn again:
My sin is pardoned—I shall die in peace.
Bury me by myself—under a cross,
And put a fair white tombstone o'er my grave.
Place on it name, nor date, nor words, save these:
"He learned in suffering that God was Love,
And died in hope." Bear with me for a while;
I shall not die ere I have slept an hour.
Mine eyes are weary: let me close them now;
I shall awake to bless thee and depart.
Visions of glory throng upon my soul:
Brother, farewell. I'll see thee yet again,
Here and hereafter. Let me slumber now.

THE CHILD AND THE MOURNERS.

A LITTLE child, beneath a tree
Sat and chanted cheerily
A little song, a pleasant song,
Which was—she sang it all day long—
"When the wind blows the blossoms fall;
But a good God reigns over all."

There passed a lady by the way,
Moaning in the face of day:
There were tears upon her cheek,
Grief in her heart too great to speak;
Her husband died but yester-morn,
And left her in the world forlorn.

She stopped and listened to the child
That looked to heaven, and singing, smiled;
And saw not for her own despair,
Another lady, young and fair,
Who also passing, stopped to hear
The infant's anthem ringing clear.

For she but few sad days before
Had lost the little babe she bore;
And grief was heavy at her soul
As that sweet memory o'er her stole,
And showed how bright had been the Past,
The Present drear and overcast.

And as they stood beneath the tree
Listening, soothed and placidly,
A youth came by, whose sunken eyes
Spake of a load of miseries;
And he, arrested like the twain,
Stopped to listen to the strain.

Death had bowed the youthful head
Of his bride beloved, his bride unwed:
Her marriage robes were fitted on,
Her fair young face with blushes shone,
When the destroyer smote her low,
And changed the lover's bliss to woe.

And these three listened to the song,
Silver-toned, and sweet, and strong,
Which that child, the livelong day,
Chanted to itself in play:

"When the wind blows the blossoms fall,
But a good God reigns over all."

The widow's lips impulsive moved;
The mother's grief, tho' unreproved,
Softened, as her trembling tongue
Repeated what the infant sung;
And the sad lover, with a start,
Conned it over to his heart.

And though the child—if child it were,
And not a seraph sitting there—
Was seen no more, the sorrowing three
Went on their way resignedly,
The song still ringing in their ears—
Was it music of the spheres?

Who shall tell? They did not know.
But in the midst of deepest woe
The strain recurred when sorrow grew,
To warn them, and console them too:
"When the wind blows the blossoms fall,
But a good God reigns over all."

LOVE OR WISDOM?

AN EXAMINATION.

WERE I so mad as I have been of yore
I would be happy: mad with Beauty's eyes;
Mad with the voice of one I could adore,
And the sweet music of her soft replies:
Mad with the charms of a serene bright face;
Possessed, and inly haunted by the grace
Of some fair creature, in her form and mind
The star and paragon of all her kind.

For, if I were so happy-mad again,
I 'd live anew. I 'd feed upon delights;
I 'd find enraptured frenzy in a pain;
I 'd roam, dreaming awake, through summer nights,
And hear a murmuring music in the air,
Which I would harmonize into a word—
That word her name. I 'd kneel, with forehead bare,
Out in the solemn woods, unseen, unheard,

And call on earth to bless her as she trod;
Sweet winds to fan her, skies to drop her joy;
And would invoke the providence of God
To keep her harmless, nor let care annoy,
Nor sorrow vex, nor pleasure pall on sense;
My being hers, hers mine, and both intense
With a full, throbbing, rapturous, infinite bliss
In being loved. For madness such as this,
I'd give up wisdom and her castled clouds.
I would unlearn all I have learned; give back
Experience, and the blazoning breath of crowds
Wafting Fame's incense forward on my track.
I would forego all hope, and all desire
But one: that life might be a blank white page,
Where Fate might write *one* word of heavenly fire—
LOVE: that so breathing the delicious rage,
My veins might run it, and my brain might take
That for sole impulse, and for Love's sweet sake
Nature put on her bridal robes, and blush
Beauty upon me from each tree and flower;
And in her nightly gleam, her morning flush,
Her buzzing noon, and evening's golden hour,
Converse with me upon the one great theme
With all her voices; meadow, mountain, stream,

Forest and ocean, uttering but one sound
Ever and ever as the world went round,
The stars repeating it, with meanings rife,
And that word LOVE;—this would be living life.

For why? And wert thou in that fiery craze
So happy, that thou wouldst indeed recall
What thou hast seen, done, suffered in the days
When thy blood boiled, and thou wert passion all?
Poor fool! forgetful of departed woes,
Past misery, anguish, discontent, and tears;
Mindful alone of pleasure and repose,
Seen through the wave of the refractive years
In colours not their own. When Love was thine,
Wert thou not heart-sore? Didst thou not repine
For something that was past, or was to come?
Was not that day as wearisome as this?
Its music stale? Its friendly voices dumb,
And thou a dreamer of remoter bliss?
Poor fool! to-morrow thou wilt bless to-day,
And wish it back; and with a new disgust
Think of the newest time, till fled away
It leaves thee memory, and a fresh mistrust.
And so thou journeyest, thankless to the dust.

Be not so mad as thou hast been of yore,
Yet happier far. Is not the Now thine own?
Now ever present? *now* for evermore?
Now always with thee, but its worth unknown,
Or lightly thought of? Lay its mystery bare,
And learn the mighty secret how to live;—
Learn that if mind be pure, the world is fair;
And that the outer sunshine cannot give
Such Warmth, and Joy, and Beauty, as the light
Cast by the inner spirit infinite,
When it is clear from every sensual stain.
Simple and thankful,—live not thou in vain,
Nor hurry to the goal with desperate haste
To make the present past, and both a waste.

THE DROP OF AMBROSIA.

"WHITHER away? whither away,
With thine eyes through the distance looking so keen?
The road is narrow, and is not long;
And if thou wouldst but awhile delay,
I would show thee sights thou hast not seen.
And thou shouldst hear a voice of song,
And thou shouldst learn of things unknown,
And live a double and fuller life.
Whither away? I prithee stay,—
There are angels near; thou 'rt not alone—
The very air is with beauty rife.
The night is lovely, fair is the day,
Why this hurry to travel away,
To close thy journey, to shut thy book?
Why at the end wilt thou ever look?
Why on the tide wilt thou ever think,
And neglect the flowrets on the brink?"

He said in answer to my cries,
"Let me alone, nor vex my soul;

I 've set my mind on a glittering prize
That I see midway towards the goal.
It shines, 'mid cloud on the mountain-top
A bright, divine, ambrosial drop.
Sad, till I grasp it, the time appears;
Into hours the weeks I 'd pack,
Compress the lingering, drawling years
To months, and never wish them back.
Why should I stay? What boots delay?
What do I care for an angel's song?
For the stars of night, or the flowers of day,
When lingering would the hours prolong?
Let me alone: my mind and heart
Are full of a joy thou canst not see,
And each impediment is pain;
Thy very talk is grief to me.
Let me away. Why should I stay,
Wasting time by answering thee?"

"Already," said I, "thy prime is past,
Thy flush of youth, thy warmth of noon,
And many delights which the sunshine cast,
Must wither away beneath the moon.

The path thou goest is short at best;
And between thine eyes and the bliss they crave,
To trip thy feet in their course so fleet,
May there not be an open grave?
Why wilt thou hurry towards the end?
There are pleasant fields on the highway-side,
Bowers whence the hymns of Love ascend,
And rivers rolling a joyous tide,
In which to lave the weary limbs
Is bliss beyond the ambrosial drop,
Which, far away, 'mid storm and dark,
Thou seest upon the mountain-top.
Straight is the path to the yawning tomb;
But we may linger on the road,
And turn to the left, and turn to the right,
To enjoy the kindly gifts of God.
I would not live *my* life so soon,
I would not spend it on *one* desire,
Nor in such fearful haste as thine
Exhaust the fuel of its fire."

Vain was my speech: he closed his ears—
Straight on he rushed, nor looked behind.
He saw afar his glittering star,

The prize for which his spirit pined.
On every side were stars as fair—
Fairer, I thought; and drops of joy,
Divinest given to mortal man,
To cheer of his life the little span,
And sanctify its right employ.
He saw them not, but ran his race
With a speed that passion alone could give;
Grew hard and grey on his narrow way,
And spent his life ere he learned to live.
And I saw before he reached his prize,
That he sunk in the grave before my eyes.

THE FOLLOWER.

I.

"WHY dost thou look so sad and wan?
And why art thou so wo-begone?
Why dost thou mutter words of fear?
Do I not love thee, father dear?
Is not earth a place of joy?
Tell me, father, tell thy boy."

II.

"There is a fiend doth follow me;
A fearful fiend thou canst not see—
But I behold him. Day or night
He is not absent from my sight:
I know thou lovest me, O my child,—
But this demon drives me wild.

III.

"The world was once both good and fair,
There was a glory in the air,
When my heart was pure and young,
By guilt and misery unwrung;
But a demon such as this,
Makes an agony of bliss.

IV.

"He besets my daily path,
I am the victim of his wrath:
He smears his fingers o'er my meat,
And poisons every thing I eat;
Puts fatal acid in my drink—
Oh, it is misery to think!

V.

"He lies beside me in my bed:
He places thorns beneath my head:
He sits upon my suffering breast,
And sends the dreams that spoil my rest:
He tracks my steps where'er I stray,
And gibes and mocks me night and day.

VI.

"When sympathetic friends condole,
And whisper comfort to my soul,
This spiteful devil comes to and fro,
And turns each friend into a foe;
Perverts my comfort into pain,
Maddening my heart and brain.

VII.

"When I think I'm all alone,
I start to hear his mocking groan:
I see his fearful face and eyes,—
That hellish face, which multiplies,
And fills the room from roof to floor
With scowling demons evermore.

VIII.

"Cruel is he. His power is great.
He pursues me. He is fate.
If I look to heaven, and pray,
I see his dreadful shape midway.
And ev'n the placid stars assume
His sneering likeness in the gloom.

IX.

"He leads my steps to dark, deep pools,
And says, none live but wretched fools.
He puts sharp weapons in my sight,
And shows me laudanum, ruby bright,
And whispers, if I like him not,
How soon my freedom may be got.

X.

"At times I think my heart will break,
But I resist him for thy sake:
His power departs when thou art near—
Of thy sweet face he stands in fear;
And if thou 'lt love me, O my boy,
I 'll grapple with him, and destroy."

XI.

"Father, I love thee. I will pray
For strength to drive this fiend away.
And if thou wilt be bold of heart,
I know the demon will depart;
And I will walk with thee abroad,
And scare him with the name of God.

XII.

"I 'll lie beside thee in the night,
He shall not come to plague thy sight.
Why should his face fill up the skies
With hideousness and mockeries?
There are fair faces up in heaven,
That always smile on the forgiven.

XIII.

"They beam upon us: they are strong:
This fiend shall not resist them long.
We 'll see them in the stars and moon,
We 'll see them in the sun at noon;
We 'll see them in the leaves and flowers,
And hear them singing 'mid the bowers.

XIV.

"He is but one. Why should we fear
When smiling angels fill the sphere?
And one among them known to thee—
Chief angel of *my* memory—
My mother, dead and gone before."—
"Talk thus, my child, I'll fear no more.

XV.

"Thy heart is pure, thy speech is mild,
I gain instruction from a child:
The fiend that haunts me must depart,—
He cannot vex me where thou art—
Thy mother's memory! God! and thee!
The fiend has fled—my soul is free."

LET US ALONE.

MANY—and yet our fate is one,
And little after all we crave—
Enjoyment of the common sun,
Fair passage to the common grave;
Our bread and fire, our plain attire,
The free possession of our own:
Rulers be wise, and lords and kings,
Let us alone—let us alone.

We have a faith, we have a law;
A faith in God, a hope in man;
And own, with reverence and awe,
Love universal as His plan.
To Charity we bow the knee,
The earth's refiner and our own:
Bigots, and fighters about words,
Let us alone—let us alone.

The world is the abode of men,
And not of demons stark and blind;
And Eden's self might bloom again
If men did justice to mankind.
We want no more of Nature's store
Than Nature meant to be our own:
Masters, and gerents of the earth,
Let us alone—let us alone.

Your meddling brought us grief and care,
And added misery day by day;
We're not so foolish as we were,
Nor fashioned of such ductile clay;
Your petty jars, your wicked wars,
Have lost their charm, the gilding's gone:
Victorious marshals, vaulting kings,
Let us alone—let us alone.

Though dwellers in a little isle,
We bear no hate to other lands,
And think that all the earth might smile,
If we and others joined our hands.
In wrong or right, why should we fight?
We'll war no more—we're wiser grown:

Quibblers, and stirrers up of hate,
Let us alone—let us alone.

White man or black, to us alike;
Foemen of no men, we will live.
We will not lift our hands to strike,
Or evil for advantage give.
Our hands are free to earn their fee,
Our tongues to let the truth be known:
So despots, knaves, and foes of right,
Let us alone—let us alone.

Great are our destinies: our task,
Long since begun, shall never end
While suffering has a boon to ask,
Or truth needs spokesmen to defend;
While vice or crime pollute the time,
While nations bleed, or patriots groan:—
Rulers be wise, and kings and priests,
Let us alone—let us alone.

MELODIES AND MYSTERIES.

Wouldst thou know what the blithe bird pipeth,
High in the morning air?
Wouldst thou know what the bright stream singeth,
Rippling o'er pebbles bare?
Sorrow the mystery shall teach thee,
And the words declare.

Wouldst thou find in the rose's blossom
More than thy fellows find?
More in the fragrance of the lily
Than odour on the wind?
Love Nature, and her smallest atoms
Shall whisper to thy mind.

Wouldst thou know what the moon discourseth
To the docile sea?
Wouldst hear the echoes of the music
Of the far infinity?

Sorrow shall ope the founts of knowledge,
And heaven shall sing to thee.

Wouldst thou see through the riddle of Being
Further than others can?
Sorrow shall give thine eyes new lustre
To simplify the plan;
And love of God and thy kind shall aid thee
To end what it began.

To Love and Sorrow all Nature speaketh;
If the riddle be read,
They the best can see through darkness
Each divergent thread
Of its mazy texture, and discover
Whence the ravel spread.

Love and Sorrow are sympathetic
With the earth and skies;
Their touch from the harp of Nature bringeth
The hidden melodies;
To them the eternal chords for ever
Vibrate in harmonies.

THE OUT-COMER AND THE IN-GOER.

For Ernest was a palace built,
A palace beautiful to see;
Marble porched, and cedar chambered,
Hung with damask drapery;
Bossed with ornaments of silver,
Interlaid with gems and gold;
Filled with carvings, from cathedrals
Rescued in the days of old;
Eloquent with books and pictures,
All that luxury could afford;
Warm with statues that Pygmalion
Might have fashioned—and adored.
In his forest glades and vistas
Lovely were the light and gloom;
Fountains sparkled in his gardens,
And exotics breathed perfume.

With him to that lordly palace
Went the friend who loved him best,

In good fortune unexalted,
In misfortune undepressed.
Little recked that friend of grandeur;
Dearer far to him than all
Wealth could offer, were the rose-buds
Growing on the garden-wall.
Dearer far were simple pleasures,
And the charms by Nature spread,
Than all gauds of power and splendour,
Heaped upon their favourite's head.
Plain was he in speech and raiment,
Humble-minded, and imbued
With a daily love of virtue,
And a daily gratitude.

Ere these palace-halls received them,
Steadfast was the faith they bore;
No estrangement came between them,
Darkening their study door.
Ernest in his friend's communion
Loved himself and all his kind,
Cherishing a loving nature,
Tutored by a happy mind,

Rich and poor were equal brothers,
In that heart, too pure to hold
Pride of lineage or of station,
Or the vanity of gold.
Never chanced it, in that season,
That he formed a thought unjust
Of the meanest fellow-mortal
Fashioned of a common dust.

But his palace somewhat changed him;
Rose-buds gathered—early walks—
Sunset roamings—nightly musings—
Mystic philosophic talks—
Nothing as of old engrossed him;
And the promptings of his friend
Fell upon his sated spirit,
Not to guide him, but offend.
Daily grew the chilling coolness,
Till, ere many months had flown,
Ernest shut his door upon him,
And resolved to live alone:
And retreating 'mid his splendour
Rooted out all love he bore

For that friend, so true, so noble,
Banished, lost for evermore.

Scarcely had that friend departed,
Pained and pensive, but resigned,
When another sought the palace,
More accordant to his mind.
He in Ernest's lordly chambers
Sat, and called him first of men;
Praised his pictures and his statues,
Flattered him with tongue and pen;
Pressed the milk of human kindness
From his bosom cold and sere,
Taught him to be harsh and cruel,
Proud, disdainful, and austere;
Filled him up with vain inflation,
And contempt for meaner clay,
As if *he* were born to govern,
It to flatter and obey.

Sometimes on his lonely pillow,
When his conscience showed the truth,
He deplored his blind estrangement
From the comrade of his youth;

But the daylight chilled the current
Of that feeling, and it froze
Hard enough to bear the burden
Of such memories as those.
And all day, in gloomy grandeur,
In his corridors and halls,
Looking at his old escutcheons,
And the portraits on the walls,
He and his companion wandered,
Calm of eye, with lips upcurled,
Aliens to the worth and goodness,
And the beauty of the world.

Wintry winds of human anguish,
Blowing round them day and night,
Never moved them—never clouded
Their serenity of light.
They were made of choice material,
Tempest-proof, from lightning free,
And the world, its joys and sorrows,
Was to them a shipless sea,
Dark, unfathomable, trackless,
Far beyond their care or ken,

Save at times, when ostentation
Brought them to the gaze of men;
But ev'n this was painful to them:
Man was cold, and earth was wide;—
They preferred the warm seclusion
Of their apathy and pride.

Who was he, the first out-goer?
He was HUMAN SYMPATHY;
And the in-comer that displaced him?
He was WORLDLY VANITY.
With the first *Religion* vanished,
Charity, and *Faith in Man*,
And the genial *Love of Nature*,
Boundless as Creation's plan.
With the second entered *Hatred*,
Harsh *Intolerance*, and *Scorn*:—
Ernest in his life's cold evening
Saw the error of his morn—
Saw his error and deplored it,
And upon his death-bed lain,
Prayed for mercy, while confessing,
Dying, he had lived in vain.

CLEON AND I.

Cleon hath a million acres,
Ne'er a one have I;
Cleon dwelleth in a palace,
In a cottage I:
Cleon hath a dozen fortunes,
Not a penny I;
Yet the poorer of the twain is
Cleon, and not I.

Cleon, true, possesseth acres,
But the landscape I;
Half the charms to me it yieldeth
Money cannot buy.
Cleon harbours sloth and dulness,
Freshening vigour I;
He in velvet, I in fustian,
Richer man am I.

Cleon is a slave to grandeur,
Free as thought am I;
Cleon fees a score of doctors,
Need of none have I:
Wealth-surrounded, care-environed,
Cleon fears to die;
Death may come, he 'll find me ready,
Happier man am I.

Cleon sees no charms in Nature,
In a daisy I;
Cleon hears no anthems ringing
In the sea and sky;
Nature sings to me for ever,
Earnest listener I;
State for state, with all attendants,
Who would change?—Not I.

THE LITTLE MOLES.

When grasping tyranny offends,
Or angry bigots frown;
When rulers plot for selfish ends
To keep the people down;
When statesmen form unholy league
To drive the world to war;
When knaves in palaces intrigue
For ribbons or a star;
We raise our heads—survey their deeds,
And cheerily reply,
Grub, little moles, grub under ground
There 's sunshine in the sky.

When canting hypocrites combine
To curb a free man's thought,
And hold all doctrine undivine
That holds their canting naught;

When round their narrow pale they plod,
And scornfully assume
That all without are cursed of God,
And justify the doom:—
We think of God's eternal love
And strong in hope reply,
Grub, little moles, grub under ground,
There 's sunshine in the sky.

When greedy authors wield the pen
To please the vulgar town,
Depict great thieves as injured men
And heroes of renown—
Pander to prejudice unclean,
Apologize for crime,
And daub the vices of the mean
With flattery like slime:
For MILTON'S craft—for SHAKSPERE'S tongue
We blush, but yet reply,
Grub, little moles, grub under ground,
There 's sunshine in the sky.

When smug philosophers survey
The various climes of earth,

And mourn, poor sagelings of a day!
Its too prolific birth;
And prove by figure, rule, and plan,
The large fair world too small
To feed the multitudes of man
That flourish on its ball:
We view the vineyards on the hills,
Or corn-fields waving high;—
Grub, little moles, grub under ground,
There's sunshine in the sky.

When men cómplain of human kind
In misanthropic mood,
And thinking evil things, grow blind
To presence of the good;
When, walled in prejudices strong,
They urge that evermore
The world is fated to go wrong
For going wrong before:
We feel the truths they cannot feel,
And smile as we reply,
Grub, little moles, grub under ground,
There's sunshine in the sky.

IMOGEN'S JOURNEY.

THE MESMERIST AND THE CLAIRVOYANTE.

How dost travel, Imogen,
When the trance upon thee lies?
Lo! I shed the influence o'er thee—
How dost travel to the skies?

"On a wonder working steed,
Like the steed in the eastern tale;
I mount his back—I try his speed—
I guide him over hill and dale,
Deftly ever I hold the reins,
And sit in the saddle haughtily;
Over the mountains and over the plains,
Over the land and over the sea."

Imogen, I know thou wanderest
At thy pleasure through the air;
Canst thou tell what thou hast witnessed,
And thy mysteries declare?

"Much I see
Lovingly,—
I feast on the beauty of the earth,
In its sadness, in its mirth,
In its decay, and in its bloom,
In its splendour, in its gloom;
To every clime remote or near
I soar in my saddle and never fear.

"Much I see
Mournfully,—
Want and ignorance and strife,
And the agonies of death and life;
Intemperance mowing its victims down
In countless hosts through city and town;
And hapless infants, newly born,
Cast on the world to shame and scorn;

Taught to lie, to steal, to swear,
Nurtured in hatred and despair,
Trained in obedience, reckless, and blind
To the worst passions of their kind.

"Much I see
Indignantly,—
The prosperous evil, the suffering good;
And battening, fattening,
Fawning, lying,
God denying,
Pestilent ingratitude.
Sons bringing shame to a father's cheek,
And daughter's doing their mothers wrong;
The strong man trampling on the weak,
The weak man worshipping the strong;
The white man selling the black for a slave
And quoting scripture in his defence,
And giving the money—the holy knave—
In support of pulpit eloquence:
Harsh intolerant Bigotry
Taking the name of Charity;
And Vice, in a masquerading dress,
White robed like virgin loveliness,

Sitting in Virtue's seat, unchallenged,
And passing herself in all men's sight
As a radiant creature
In form and feature,
A visitant of love and light;—
Tyrants ruling,
Wise men fooling,
And stolid Ignorance preaching and schooling:
All this I see
Most mournfully,
And haste to descend to the Earth again,
And rest on the level ground with men.

"But in my trance of yesterday
I was travelling far away;
Far away in the air upborne,
I, clear-seeing Imogen,
Lost myself in the depths serene
Twelve hours eastward of the morn.
The full round Earth beneath me lay
A large bright orb of silvery gray,
The bi-centuple of the moon;
I heard her rolling on her way,

Her tidal oceans pealing a tune,
Sea with sea,
Harmoniously,
Through the dread Infinity.
And a living voice spake to my soul,
As I watched the mighty planet roll;—
An angel of another sphere,
An alien and a wanderer here;
And spirit to spirit, mind to mind,—
I to him and he to me—
We spoke together bodilessly,
On the deeds of human kind.

"'Oh lovely is your world,' he said;
'Behold the glory round it spread,
Behold its oceans, how they shine
Suffused with radiance divine:
Its teeming continents behold—
Its mountain summits fired with gold;
Its gleaming poles of purest white,
Its tropics bathed in fruitful light;
A lovely world, a gorgeous plan—
How fares the brotherhood of man?'

"'The brotherhood of man?' said I,
Mingling a whisper and a sigh:—
'Alas, the Earth, though old in time,
Is young in wisdom:—Brotherhood?—
There is no land in any clime
Where even the word is understood:—
Look below at yon fair isles,
Laving themselves in Ocean's smiles,—
They rule the Earth, yet cannot teach
The simple truth thy words convey,—
Though ever the few dissuade, and preach,
Ever the many fight and slay.'

"'Blind creatures,' said the voice to me,
'If they know not Charity—
But surely they have learned the truth
That God is love—and growing wise,
They study from their tenderest youth
That holiest of mysteries?'

"'They know it not,' I made reply,
'Of all the swarms that live and die

Upon that wide revolving ball,
The pettiest fraction of them all
Has heard that truth:—and of those few
Though hundreds *think*, the units *do*.
Aliens, foes, estranged from birth,
Are the nations of the earth;
One to the east of a mountain cope,
Hates the one to the western slope;
One to the left bank of a river,
Pursues with its deadly wrath for ever
The one that prospers on the right,
And works for ever to its despite;
And to the earth's extremest bound,
Brotherhood is nowhere found.'

"'But is there none,' said the voice, "to show
'The wrong, the shame, the guilt, the woe,
The fearful madness of such crime?
Is there none with a soul sublime
To open their hearts that they may see
That Love is the law of infinity,
The dominant chord of the mighty seven
That form the harmonies of heaven?'

'Many to teach, but few to hear.
Though scant the boundaries of our sphere,
Truth goes slowly over the zones,
And stumbles over pebble stones.
The laziest worm that ever crept,
Although at each remove it slept,
Would measure the girth of the rolling earth
Ten times o'er, in a tithe of the time
It takes slow-footed Truth to climb
The dense obstructions in its course,
Raised by folly, fraud, or force,
And circle it once from pole to pole;
Never yet, thou wandering soul,
Has one great Truth pierced through the crust
Of universal human dust.'

"'It cannot be,' said the voice again:
'Was there never born 'mong men
Th' incarnate God?' 'Alas!' I said,
'Look at the Earth—behold it spread
Its countless regions to the day;
Behold—I'll show thee in the ray,
Every little speck of land

Where the truth has made a stand—
I could cover them with my hand.

" 'See yon little continent,
And close beside it other two
Of aspect more magnificent,
And large dimensions, looming through
An atmosphere of radiant blue:
The smallest spot alone has heard
The great and civilizing word
That God is Love; and even there
Men hate each other, and declare
Fierce war for difference of degree,
And shadows of divergency
On minor points, and dogmas dim,
That whether we cling to or let fall
Is of no account in the eyes of Him
Who gave a law beyond them all.

" 'Ignorance is the lord below;—
Hatred, Bigotry, and Scorn
Do his bidding, and scatter woe

On the climates of the morn:
Do his bidding and high behest
On the regions of the west,
Obey his rules from north to south,
And take their orders from his mouth.'

"'Farewell!' said the voice of the upper air,
'I'll change my track, I'll go not there;
To other planets I will roam,
Where Love and Knowledge find a home.'
'Farewell!' said I, 'thou wandering sprite,
I must return to earth ere night,
And bear for awhile, as best I can,
The cold, dull ignorance of man.'"

* * * * *

* * * * *

Now thou'rt wakened, Imogen,
Dost thou know where thou hast been?
"No," she said, and rubbed her eyes,
And looked around her with surprise,

"I have slept—and I have heard—
Something—nothing—who can tell?
Waking memory knows no word
And has no sense of what befel.
But when again thy fingers pour
The influence through me, if it chance
That I can summon up once more
The lost ideas of my trance,
I 'll tell thee truly what I see,
Wise or foolish, as may be."

TWO MYSTERIES.

Two awful mysteries compass me around,
And follow me for ever as I go:
I see, yet see them not. I know they *are*,
And that they change more rapidly than thought,
Yet feel 'mid variability that change,
While it affects them, leaves them still the same.
Sane, I enjoy them both—both are myself:
Insane, I fly them, but they haunt me still:
Two mysteries and yet one—one infinite.
Two undistinguished points in space and time,
Ever effaced and ever permanent.
Two little atoms so magnificent
That all the past conspired to give them birth,
And all the mighty future hangs on one.
My Self, my Now; God's Self, God's Now;—so linked
That not Eternity can disentwine

One from the other. Both to be employed
So that their circle evermore shall stretch
Till suns, and systems, and whole firmaments
Shall seem but points commensurate with them,
And aye to widen ever and evermore,
Nearing the throne where the Eternal sits,
Is joy, love, knowledge, happiness divine—
Oh that the secret of their use was mine!

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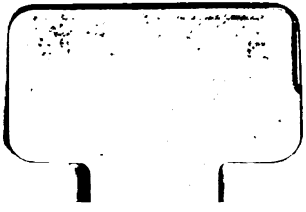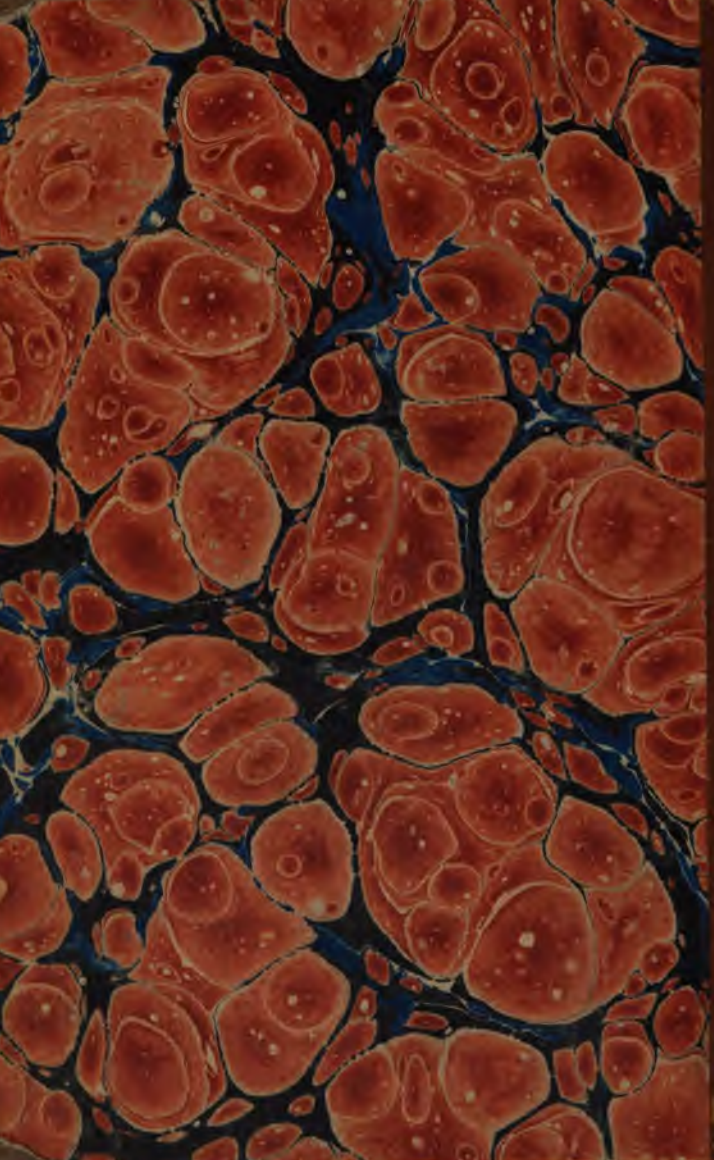
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